

# How GIA will affect the potato industry

By Gisele Irvine

“A key aspect to GIA is the pre-agreement between government (MPI) and industry groups around decisions and actions on how to respond in the event of a pest incursion.”

Potatoes New Zealand Inc. (PNZ) has now signed the GIA Deed for Biosecurity Readiness and Response. The GIA Deed is a legal Deed developed by a joint Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and industry working group and contains high level biosecurity principles and baseline commitments.

We all know that New Zealand’s biosecurity system encompasses offshore, border and on-shore activities that manage the risk new pests entering into the country. PNZ and other signatories have an important role to play across the biosecurity continuum through GIA.

## Our commitments

Under GIA, government and industry groups (signatories) commit to joint decision making and joint cost sharing in relation to biosecurity issues. This collaborative partnership approach provides more certainty that high priority pests will be found and responded to within an appropriate timeframe.

As part of our GIA requirements, PNZ will now take a more active involvement across the biosecurity system in a bid to reduce the likelihood of new pests entering New Zealand. Through joint decision making and resource sharing, approaches are discussed and agreed.

## How GIA works for better biosecurity



The GIA Deed provides for the development of operational agreements which are detailed documents which individual industry GIA Deed signatory groups develop and agree with MPI. They commit parties to undertaking certain activities and cost sharing to deliver an agreed biosecurity outcome for readiness and/or response. These are commitments to biosecurity outcomes over and above the minimum commitments in the GIA Deed.

Operational agreements may be either pest specific to a crop or may be cross-

sectoral. For example, our Solanaceae crops share many common pests of concern, so there are several potential combinations that an operational agreement can be drafted around. PNZ Inc. will be consulting with growers on any operational agreements before they are signed.

## How are the costs shared?

Under GIA, the proportion of cost share is set for each operational agreement that is signed based on the assessed benefit to



both parties. However, the government has committed to funding a minimum of 50% of the readiness and response activities for any operational agreement. Industry groups that participate in GIA can set fiscal caps for responses so that costs are controlled.

Where there is more than one industry group involved, the cost is split between these groups. Where an industry group is a beneficiary of response activities, but they have not signed the Deed, the government will levy that group for their share of costs regardless. However, that group will have no say in decisions that are made.

### What are the minimum commitments?

There are minimum commitments that must be met by all signatories and some that must be met by either the industry signatories or the government signatory. Minimum commitments that growers need to engage in and outcomes which growers need to be aware of include:

- Identify your risks, be aware of the unknowns and keep informed about which pests are being monitored for and which pests are being found overseas. Be aware of the changing behaviours of pest communities.
- When you do see something unusual report it to the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline: 0800 80 99 66.
- Recognise that protecting crops protects your bottom line.

- Promote awareness that biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.
- Encourage community surveillance as vital to pest control.
- Develop close engagement with MPI so that as our regulator they have a sufficient understanding of our industry profile.
- Gather knowledge about where crop varieties are grown and by whom, so that in the event of a response we can quickly identify who to assist and how to respond.
- Build closer relationships with contractors e.g. pickers, transporters and other service providers to enable them to better understand biosecurity risks and put them in a more informed position to assist if necessary.
- Consider GIA commitments as opportunities to better grow the biosecurity knowledge base of our members and gain a more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of our industry. Assist other stakeholders to be better prepared.

### How the potato industry can be better prepared...

PNZ has been proactive in identifying how the potato industry can be better prepared. Our sector is undertaking projects that work towards meeting our minimum commitments. These include:

- Participation in biosecurity meetings and working groups.

- Identifying priority pests and developing awareness materials, including fact sheets.
- Developing a farm biosecurity plan which outlines actions to reduce the spread of pests by improving farm biosecurity practices and promoting biosecurity signage, farm hygiene and surveillance.
- Development of a Biosecurity Management Plan. This will collate all information and resources in one place. Much of the detail in the biosecurity plan will be gathered from the activities listed above. Specific modules will be rolled out to industry as we progress.
- We are also taking steps to link with the National Biosecurity Capability Network and MPI to enable industry to engage with the biosecurity response network and to develop training in roles such as in Response Governance.

Other activities being currently undertaken by our sector to raise awareness of the biosecurity system include contributing to the development and review of the Import Health Standard.

Look out for further updates in upcoming issues of *NZGrower* magazine.

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